

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6294
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: IS, PINT, PFOR
SUBJECT: EXCERPTS FROM RECENT BEGIN INTERVIEWS

REF: TEL AVIV 3609

SUMMARY: IN THE WEEK FOLLOWING ISRAEL'S NINTH NATIONAL ELECTIONS, VICTORIOUS LIKUD LEADER MENAHEM BEGIN HAS ENGAGED IN A FLURRY OF INTERVIEWS, FOR BOTH LOCAL AND INTERNAIONAL MEDIA HIS STATEMENTS ON THE "LIBERATED TERRITORIES" OF JIDEA AND SAMARIA, AND ON THE POSSIBLE EXTENSION OF ISRAELI LAW THERETO, HAVE MADE INTERNATIONAL HEADLINES, AND ARE NOT REPEATED HERE. RATHER, WE HAVE SIFTED THROUGH THE LOCAL REPORTAGE FOR SOME OF BEGIN'S OFTEN PUNGENT PHRASES ON OTHER SUBJECTS. THESE INCLUDE HIS MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CARTER; THE DMC'S COALITION DEMAND FOR NEW WLECTIONS WITHIN TWO YEARS; BEING CALLED A "TERRORIST;" WAR TALK; BEING A HARLINER; LIKUD'S ECONOMIC MEASURES; AND HIS PERSONAL SURPRISE AT LIKUD'S MARGIN OF CITORY.END SUMMARY
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1. MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CARTER. IN THE LAST WEEK, BEGIN HAS SAID SEVERAL TIMES THT HE WOULD PREPARE HIMSELF VERY THOROUGHLY, "WITH THE HELP OF BOTH DOCUMENTS AND MAPS," FOR HIS MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CARTER, WHICH HE THOUGHT CULD TAKE PLACE "NOT BEFORE THE BEGINNING OF JULY." BEGIN SPOKE OF PRESIDENT

CARTER'S DEEP INTELLIGENCE, AND AGREED COMPLETELY WITH THE PRESIDENT'S POSITION ON HUMAN RIGHTS.

2. NO CONCESSION TO DMC ON ELECTIONS IN TWO YEARS. BEGIN HAS CALLED THE DMC'S INSISTENCE ON NEW ELECTIONS WITHIN TWO YEARS OF ELECTORAL REFORM "NOTHING OTHER THAN OBSTINACY ABOUT PRESTIGE." ACCEPTANCE OF THE DMC WISH TO ADD NEW NATIONAL ELECTIONS TO JUNE'S HISTADRUT ELECTIONS AND NEXT YEAR'S MUNICIPAL BALLOTING IS INCONCEIVABLE, ACCORDING TO BEGIN, AND THE NATION CANNOT PERMIT SO SOON AGAIN THE LARGEST PART OF ITS ELECTED OFFICIALS TO BE OUT CAMPAIGNING INSTEAD OF DEVOTING THEMSELVES TO WORK. BEGIN HOPED ALL THE SAME TO PERSUADE THE DMC TO ENTER A GOVERNMENT COALITION AND NOT TO MAKE AN ULTIMATUM OF ITS CALL FOR NEW ELECTIONS.

3. ON BEING CALLED A TERRORIST: "WE FOUGHT FOR THE LIBERATION OF OUR PEOPLE WHO WERE DESTROYED IN EUROPE AND WE DID EVERYTHING THAT WE COULD FOR THE JEWISH PEOPLE. I BELIEVE THAT THESE SILLY REACTIONS WILL PASS AFTER I FORM A GOVERNMENT AND AM INVITED FOR A MEETING WITH CARTER. IF AFTER THEN THEY DO NOT CASE, I WILL KNOW WHAT TO ANSWER."

4. TALK OF WAR. "WE HEAR THREATS OF WAR EVERY MORNING. MY ADVISE IS, DO NOT DISMISS THEM AND DO NOT GET UPSET. NOT TO DISMISS THEM MEANS TO BE READY TO DETER AGGRESSION. NOT TO GET UPSET MEANS TO ACT ACCORDING TO OUR POLITICAL DECISIONS, WHICH CANNOT BE UNCLASSIFIED

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INFLUENCED BY THREATS OF VIOLENCE."

5. ON ARABS AND BEING A HARLINER. "IT IS A FACT THAT ALL FIVE PRIME MINISTERS WHO HAVE HELD OFFICE IN ISRAEL WERE PREPARED TO INVITE THE ARAB RULERS, AND PARTICULARLY THE RULERS OF EGYPT, TO TALK WITH THEM 'ANY PLACE,' 'ANY TIME' IN ORDER TO NEGOTIATE WITH THEM ABOUT PEACE. HOWEVER, THE ARAB LEADERS TURNED A DEAF EAR AND, AS IS KNOWN, THOSE WHO PRECEDED ME IN THIS JOB HAD DIFFERENT VIEWS THAN MINE. THIS MEANS THAT THERE IS NO REASON FOR THE SPECIAL ATTITUDE TOWARD ME BECAUSE OF WHAT THEY CALL HARDNESS. IT IS A FACT THAT ALL THE HARDNESS COMES FROM THE ARAB SIDE, SINCE THEY USE--LISTEN TO THIS, CONFUSED JEWS--THE TERM 'NOT AN INCH.'"

6. ECONOMIC MEASURES "THERE WILL BE NO UNEMPLOYMENT UNDER THE LIKUD CABINET* THERE WILL NOT* UNEMPLOYMENT IS INCONCEIVABLE." "WE CAN CERTAINLY CURB

INFLATION BY UP TO 15 PERCENT A YEAR. WE WILL DO THIS THROUGH A TRIPARTITE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CABINET, THE HISTADRUT AND THE EMPLOYERS. FOR A PERIOD OF TWO YEARS THERE WILL BE NO INCREASE IN TAXES, PRICES WILL NOT GO UP AND THE WORKERS WILL REFRAIN FROM ANY DEMAND TO INCREASE THEIR WAGES. THUS WE WILL SUCCEED IN CURBING INFLATION, WE WILL BRING BACK STABILITY TO THE CURRENCY, WE WILL INCREASE OUTPUT AND PRODUCTION. AFTER THE FIRST TWO YEARS WE WILL CHECK ON WHAT CAN BE DONE TO ADD TO THE REAL WAGES OF THE WORKERS." "WE WILL VERY SERIOUSLY AND URGENTLY CONSIDER COMPLETELY ELIMINATING CONTROLS OVER FOREIGN CURRENCY."

7. HISTADRUT OWNERSHIP, STRIKE ARBITRATION. "WE WOULD LIKE THE HISTADRUT ITSELF TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN ITS GREAT AND POSITIVE FUNCTION AS A TRADE UNION AND ITS OWNERSHIP OF COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISES. IF OUR FACTION UNCLASSIFIED

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DOES WELL IN THE COMING ELECTIONS, A COMMITTEE WILL BE ESTABLISHED THAT WILL DEAL WITH HISTADRUT ENTERPRISES WITH THE AIM OF CHANGING THE NATURE OF THEIR OWNERSHIP. ONE OF THE POSSIBILITIES FOR THIS IS THROUGH DISTRIBUTION OF THE SHARES AMONG THE WORKERS." "A NATIONAL LAW OF ARBITRATION IN THE ESSENTIAL SERVICES WILL BE LEGISLATED SOON BECAUSE A MAJORITY IN THE KNESSET SUPPORTS IT."

8. PERSONAL SURPRISE AT LIKUD MARGIN OF VICTORY. "I TOO WAS SURPRISED FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE LIKUD AND THE ALIGNMENT. I NEVER STOPPED SAYING THAT WE AD A CHANCE OF REACHING FIRST PLACE, BUT NOT WITH A DIFFERENCE OF 9 OR 10 SEATS." LEWIS

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